

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION TO HMG DECISION TO GRANT A GREATER DEGREE
OF AUTONOMY TO ANGUILLA

REFS: (A) STATE 126465 (B) STATE 126466

1. SO FAR, EASTERN CARIBBEAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF HMG'S DECISION TO GRANT THE BREAKAWAY ISLAND OF ANGUILLA GREATER DEGREE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT WITHOUT FORMALLY TERMINATING ITS CONSTITUTIONAL TIES WITH THE ASSOCIATED STATE OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA HAS BEEN LIMITED TO STRAIGHT NEWS REPORTING OF WIRE SERVICE ARTICLES ON THE BRITISH PLAN, WEBSTER'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLAN, AND BRADSHAW'S REJECTION OF IT.

2. THE MAY 31 EDITION OF BARBADOS ADVOCATE NEWS CARRIED TWO REUTERS REPORTS; THE FIRST REPORTED IN DETAIL THE BRITISH PLAN FOR AUTONOMY FOR ANGUILLA, AND THE SECOND DESCRIBED THE ANGUILLAN REACTION TO THE PLAN. IN A PUBLIC RALLY IN ANGUILLA, ANGUILLA COUNCIL LEADER RONALD WEBSTER WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "ANGUILLA IS FREE FROM THE DICTATES OF THE ST. KITTS GOVERNMENT." HE ALSO
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CALLED UPON ANGUILLANS "TO POOL THEIR RESOURCES TOGETHER TO MAKE

A NATION (SIC) OUT OF ANGUILLA. LASTLY, WEBSTER THANKED ALL ANGUILLANS AND FIRENDS FOR THE AID IN THE STRUGGLE (TO SECEDE FROM ST. KITTS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) WHICH "HAS BEEN FOUGHT VICTORIOUSLY WITHOUT BLOODSHED." HMG'S COMMISSIONER IN ANGUILLA, DAVID LEBRETON, DISCLOSED THAT THE NEW ANGUILLA CONSTITUTION WILL BE SIMILAR TO THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF THE CAYMAN ISLANDS, PROVIDING FOR A LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND A COMMISSIONER.

3. IN JUNE 2 EDITION OF ADVOCATE NEWS, REUTER ARTICLE REPORTED THAT ST. KITTS PREMIER ROBERT BRADSHAW "CONDEMNS AND REJECTS" BRITISH PLAN WHICH RUNS COUNTER TO STRONG INTEGRATION MOVEMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN. HE SAID THE PLAN "IS DAMAGING TO THE ASSOCIATED STATE OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA."

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE HAS NOT BEEN ANY FAVORABLE OR ADVERSE COMMENT AS YET ON BRITISH COMPROMISE PLAN FOR GREATER ANGUILLA AUTONOMY, IT IS PROBABLE THAT THERE WILL BE CRITICISM OF THE BRITISH DECISION WHEN IMPLICATIONS ARE CONSIDERED BY CARIBBEAN GOVERNMENTS. BRITISH PLAN DOES ENCOURAGE "FRAGMENTATION" OF CARIBBEAN RATHER THAN "INTEGRATION" AND ANGUILLAN EXAMPLE COULD INSPIRE DISSIDENT LEADERS ON SMALL ISLANDS SUCH AS CARRIACOU, BEQUIA, NEVIS, AND BARBUDA, WHO BELIEVE THAT THESE ISLANDS ARE NEGLECTED BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS OF GRENADA, ST. VINCENT, ST. KITTS, AND ANTIGUA, RESPECTIVELY, TO PRESS FOR STATUS SIMILAR TO ANGUILLA VIS-A-VIS CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS. BRITTON

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